

VZCZCXRO9415  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHAM #4738/01 3331749  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 291749Z NOV 07  
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1099  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0627

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 004738

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

FOR FOR NEA AND PRM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/29/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [SOCI](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: IRAQIS IN JORDAN UPDATE - NOVEMBER 28

REF: AMMAN 4560

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Ambassador Hale urged new Jordanian Prime Minister Nader Dahabi, Minister of Planning Suhair al-Ali, and Chief of Royal Court Bassem Awadallah to regularize the status of Iraqis in Jordan. The Ambassador attended an Iraqi Chaldean mass on November 25 and offered continued embassy outreach to respond to the questions and concerns of Iraqi Christians in Jordan. Embassy observers report a significant increase in both Iraqi families returning overland to Iraq, and in cross-border commercial traffic at the Karameh-Trebil crossing. Iraqi-Jordanian negotiations over the transaction details of the Government of Iraqi's \$8 million assistance pledge continued during Iraqi Finance Minister Jabr's November 27-28 visit to Jordan. END SUMMARY.

AMBASSADOR PRESSES NEW PRIME MINISTER  
TO REGULARIZE IRAQI STATUS  
-----

12. (C) During his first meeting with new Jordanian Prime Minister Nader Dahabi on November 27, the Ambassador urged the PM to legalize (i.e., issue residence permits) the status of Iraqis living in Jordan and to waive their overstay fines (which at 1.5 Jordanian dinars per person per day rapidly accumulate into sizeable financial burdens). During a separate November 27 call on Minister of Planning Suhair al-Ali by Congresswoman Betty McCollum, the Ambassador reiterated his request for regularization, noting the continued (albeit unfounded) fear in the Iraqi community of deportation if out-of-status Iraqis attempt to access educational or health services or to seek work. He did so with Royal Court Chief Awadallah that same day. While Jordanian officials were non-committal, they said they would work on the issue.

13. (C) COMMENT AND NOTE: While 56 percent of Iraqi respondents to the May survey by Norwegian research institute FAFO claimed to have legal residence, other observers including local NGOs and the ICRC estimate the number to be far fewer. Regularization of status remains a major obstacle to supporting the needs of Iraqis in Jordan. Granting legal residency would allay Iraqi fears of deportation and encourage greater numbers of Iraqis to access expanding social services being offered by the GOJ, the UN, and NGOs. While the GOJ is not in the business of mass roundups or deportations, Iraqis and NGOs report that such fears linger and individual detentions and deportations occur - though the GOJ maintains deportations affect only those posing a security or criminal threat. END COMMENT AND NOTE.

CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITY ON THE INCREASE  
-----

14. (SBU) During a November 27 Karamah-Trebil border visit, the Embassy's Civil Affairs Liaison Team (CALT) observed a dramatic increase in cross-border vehicle movement. CALT team members counted 8-10 vehicles, mostly rented Suburbans loaded with the trappings of family life (furniture, bedding, televisions), compared with negligible movement during the preceding months. Families (of four to six-members) appeared to occupy the Iraq-bound vehicles. Jordanian border officials reported that they too have observed this trend of Iraqis departing Jordan over the past week. In addition, two-way truck and commercial traffic appeared to be on the increase as well with 250-300 trucks and commercial vehicles crossing per day, up from 100-125 just one week ago.

#### OUTREACH TO IRAQI CHRISTIANS

-----

15. (SBU) On November 25, the Ambassador attended Sunday mass at the Chaldean Vicariate church. An offshoot of the Catholic Church, the Iraqi Chaldeans represent the largest Iraqi Christian community in Jordan - self-estimated at between 10,000 and 12,000 members strong. The Church offers its poorer members occasional food and non-food item support, informal education in its churches, and catechism classes for Iraqi children in Amman and Fuheis.

16. (SBU) Following the service, the Ambassador met with Father Ramon al-Moussali, a Syrian priest who has lived in Jordan for nearly a decade, and approximately 30 members of his congregation. Chaldean families recounted their reasons for fleeing Iraq - threats, beatings, kidnapping and murder - as well as the physical hardships and bureaucratic obstacles related to life in Jordan and their prospects for resettlement.

AMMAN 00004738 002 OF 002

17. (SBU) The Ambassador committed to regular follow-on meetings between embassy officers and Father Moussali and his parish. The next such meeting will take place on December 13; Post will send a consular officer, refcoord, and human rights/religious freedoms officer to hear the concerns of the community and answer questions regarding eligibility for resettlement programs in an attempt to provide accurate information and dispel some of the myriad myths abounding within the Iraqi community. Embosffs will encourage UNHCR Jordan representatives to join these meetings as appropriate.

#### GOVERNMENTS OF IRAQ AND JORDAN DISCUSSING USD8 MILLION PLEDGE

-----

18. (C) Following up on the previously reported transfer of USD 8 million from the Government of Iraq to the Iraqi Embassy in Amman to assist with displaced Iraqis living in Jordan (ref A), Iraqi Minister of Finance Bayan Jabr Solagh traveled to Amman November 27-28 to discuss disbursement mechanisms. Several sources have confirmed that negotiations between the GOI and GOJ are ongoing with the Iraqi government continuing to insist upon a direct bilateral transfer. Any agreement reached will be reported septel.  
Hale